

# Crusher Casey's Route From Skulls To Sculls

[continued from page 1]

in that Hollywood stereotyped throaty rasp, "Champeen of the Woild."

Casey took them all on --- Ed Don George... Marvin Westenberg... Ed 'Strangler' Lewis and another bucko from Ireland--- Danno Mahoney, the Irish Whip, and assorted Masked Marvels.

He also locked grips with the fabled Jimmy Londos informally because the Golden Greek by then was no longer active.

Casey recalls working out with the Polish Immortals of wrestling-- the Zybsko brothers-- who by that time also no longer were wrestling actively.

While Steve as he tells it in the soft brogue that lingers on from his native Erin, started by wrestling his brothers, he moved on to prepare to represent Ireland in the Olympics. But the Kerry Terror never made the Olympics because he had wrestled in a couple of professional bouts and so lost his eligibility for the simon pure Olympic Games.

Maybe otherwise he'd never have come to Boston and the Bowser ring wars.

But he did and won it all despite putting in five years in the army.

He retired in 1946 after he was shot in an altercation in one of the three pubs in which he'd invested. He had Crusher Casey's on Mass. Avenue in the shadow of the Arena where he was the top banana for so many years. His other establishments were in Cambridge and Somerville.

"I never really got all my strength back after that," Casey says recalling the 15 months he spent in the hospital recovering from the gunshot wound.

Could be, but anyone thinking about taking him on has to be out of his gourd.

If Steve wrestled early in life, he and his brothers also had another love--rowing.

The bug lives on.

Casey rows regularly today. Not only that, but he has utilized sculling as a means to a very worthy end.

The Cohasset squire has some 20 young men-- the number varies from time to time--under his aegis and coaches them in the strenuous art of rowing.

The pupils come not only from the local area but all the way from Boston to learn, practice and work out under Crusher.

Casey has been coaching them for quite a spell now and takes as much if not more pride in the fact that 20 of his young men have graduated from college as he did his victories on the mat.

He feels a sense of accomplishment, too, with some of his pupils who turned to sculling and turned off from dope and crime.

"They've done well," says Casey of his students and reveals that one eight-oared crew he coached has just returned from a triumph in a Philadelphia regatta over a vaunted Coast Guard boat.

They've done all right in other competitions, too.

One well might wonder where a sculler works out in Cohasset since sculls being the fickle craft they are, the ocean is no place for their tipsy characteristics.

Casey's crews work out at Strait Pond which was a bit of a problem recently.

"They drained the water to install a new flood gate," Casey explains. "So we were beached for awhile/until they let the water back in, because the water was just too low for rowing."

His crews work out usually at 6:30 a.m. and 6:30 p.m.

There's another Cohasset touch to the sculling.

Casey's craft which he keeps stored in a boathouse in Hingham shipyard are made by Bill Howe, also formerly of Cohasset.

And they're not your everyday scull.

The Howe models are made of fibreglas which he also uses to build other types of craft and also racing cars.

Obviously in addition to the advantage of maintenance with the comparatively trouble free material, the scull are lighter, hence swifter.

It figures that Casey's two sons would be scullers. They've rowed competitively not only in this country but in Ireland and in both Australia and New Zealand, just as their father tested his rowing prowess against the English and Russians in international competitions.

All his life, Casey has loved the outdoors so it figures he'd be a hunter.

He keeps a passel of Hunting dogs--Beagles, Redbacks, Labs. His safaris have taken him from New Hampshire and Maine all the way to Texas.

But he also prowls the local woods in season with his baying pack.

Wrestling was good to Casey, and he's not about to knock it.

But he also makes no bones about deriving more satisfaction from working with young people in rowing.

"If it helps even a little to provide them with an interest and an activity that will keep them off the streets and out of trouble, then I have to think it's worthwhile," Casey says.

Since it has already more than once, there's no doubt about it.

So for the former "Champeen" it would seem that coaching sculls has it all over cracking skulls.

Papa Paul never would have agreed.

He'd have growled, "Who's gonna pay to watch somebody row a boat?"

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